



# Embassy of the United States of America

## Public Affairs Section

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## PRESS RELEASE

**Integrated Justice Centers are now part of the formal justice system**

### **U.S. Government helps 10,000 Bolivians to achieve justice**

As one of his last official presentations prior to the January 22 inauguration, President Eduardo Rodríguez formally incorporated the pilot program of USAID-funded Integrated Justice Centers into the formal justice system. The justice centers will thus be able to expand their services to a broader population and continue promoting conciliatory mechanisms that have already provided timely and effective access to justice to more than 10,000 Bolivian citizens since 2004.

The establishment of Integrated Justice Centers is one of the most important achievements of the USG-GOB cooperation program in Bolivia. With USAID support, the centers bring justice to the local level by offering legal services to poor communities in collaboration with municipal governments, mediators, public defenders, lawyers, judges, human rights advisors and others. Mediation, conciliation, education on legal rights and other legal services are provided free of charge.

Eight of the nine centers currently operating in Bolivia are financed by USAID (six centers in El Alto, one in the Chapare and one in the Yungas). This was possible thanks to a collaborative effort between USAID, the Vice-Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Branch, enabling the Bolivian Government to provide justice to citizens in some of the poorest and most conflictive regions of the country.

The Centers involve direct local participation and, in many cases, recruit volunteers from the communities where they are located. The volunteers receive special training in legal services and often speak indigenous languages.

The Integrated Justice Centers are part of USAID's \$100 million annual cooperation program that works with Bolivians to promote licit economic growth in coca-growing and associated areas; increase incomes of Bolivia's poor; manage forest, water and biodiversity resources; improve health; and increase confidence in democratic institutions and processes.

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